THE

BOOKS AND CHARACTERS

OF THE

NEW TESTAMENT.

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NEW YORK:
CHARLES S. FRANCIS AND COMPANY.
1852.

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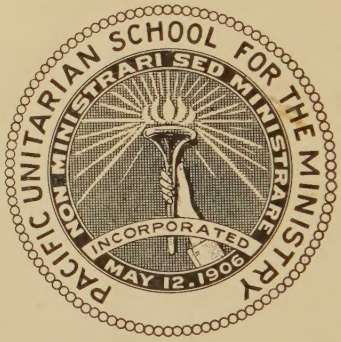

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THE

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OF THE

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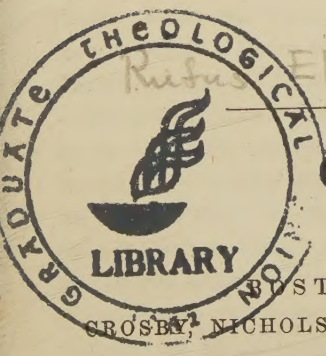

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GENERAL DIRECTIONS.

In this course of Christian instruction, there are eight text-books, bearing the following titles: — Early Religious Lessons; Palestine and the Hebrew People; Lessons on the Old Testament; Life of Christ; Books and Characters of the New Testament; Religious Duties and Christian Morals; Doctrines of Scripture; Scenes from Christian History.

The first of these is designed to be used — though not to the entire exclusion of other text-books for that period — by all pupils under ten years of age. As children enter the Sunday School at different ages, it seems necessary to leave them, up to a certain period, without a very rigidly determined order of instruction, and more than afterwards under the direction of the individual preferences and judgments of their teachers, in regard to their methods of study. The first manual, consisting of selected passages of Scripture and simple illustrative verses,

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is offered to these teachers as an aid to their work. The object here is not so much connection between the parts, as to fasten in the child's mind certain sacred words and truths, fraught with hallowed associations, which may prove a treasury of comfort and suggest themes of devout meditation through the whole of life. *Each exercise is to be thoroughly fixed in the pupil's memory.* It may then be explained and illustrated, according to the teacher's pleasure or opportunity.

At the beginning of each school year, all the pupils within the school, that have arrived at the age of ten within the year preceding, are to be arranged in classes of convenient size, and to be occupied one school year — not more nor less — with Manual No. 2, — " Palestine and the Hebrew People."

All pupils that have become eleven years old within the year preceding, are to study for one year Manual No. 3. No. 4 is for scholars between the ages of twelve and thirteen. No. 5 is for those between thirteen and fourteen. No. 6 is for those between fourteen and fifteen. No. 7 is for those between fifteen and sixteen. No. 8 is for those between sixteen and seventeen.

The order of succession in the subjects of study will be observed, and the obvious reasons that prescribe it. The success of the plan, in any given

school, will probably depend much on a strict adherence to this system.

Most of the text-books contain only about thirty lessons each. Room is thus provided for the vacation that is introduced into some Sunday Schools, for unavoidable interruptions within the year, and for a review of the book.

The lessons are of such length that they may be fully recited in about half an hour; and, to do them justice, not less than that amount of time should be left free from all other occupation in every Sunday School exercise.

The design is that each subject, in the order, shall be thus thoroughly mastered and *understood* by the class; that, at the close of the year, they may be as well fitted for examination in it, as the classes of our common schools are in their several branches of study. It is earnestly recommended to parents, teachers, and pastors, that they require of the young committed to their charge, and pursuing this course, so much time and application as will accomplish this end. The result, to say nothing of spiritual impressions, would be the possession of a body of Christian information of the utmost value, and such as no youth can remain ignorant of, in a community like ours, without cause for deep reproach.

The names of the writers, arranged alphabetical-

ly, and not according to the order of the books in the course, are as follows: —

Rev. Geo. W. Briggs,
" S. G. Bulfinch,
" Rufus Ellis,
" Edward E. Hale,
" F. D. Huntington,
" John H. Morison,
" Ephraim Peabody.

NOTE TO TEACHERS.

This little manual is chiefly a communication of the *results* of inquiries into the history of the New Testament Scriptures. The Teacher, however, should make himself familiar with the arguments and processes of investigation upon which these conclusions rest, and can hardly do justice to the pupil without a constant reference to such works as Norton's Genuineness, Palfrey's Lowell Lectures, and Schumann's Introduction, works which should be found in every parish library.

For convenience of arrangement, several of the Lessons in this volume have been extended beyond the proper limits for a single exercise; but the *number* of the Lessons is not so large as in the other volumes. The Teacher can divide the Lessons according to his own judgment.

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THE BOOKS AND CHARACTERS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

LESSON I.

INTRODUCTORY QUESTIONS.

I.

Q. How long is it since Christianity was first preached?

A. About eighteen hundred years.

Q. Does this period of time carry us back to a very great antiquity?

A. It does not. It leaves us far within the limits of authentic, written history.

Q. Was there any such thing as literature at the commencement of the Christian era?

A. Some of the most distinguished writers that the world has ever known flourished before and at the time of the Saviour's coming, and we are in possession of their works. Of these writers many are eminent and trustworthy historians.

Q. Have we, then, any history of the beginning of Christianity?

A. We have, in various forms, very full and most interesting accounts of its origin and early progress.

Q. From whom would the narrative of the establishment of a new religion be most likely to proceed?

A. From its friends, who would appreciate, whilst others would despise it, and pass it by as undeserving of notice.

Q. What is the name of the book which contains the earliest records of our faith?

A. The New Testament, which, together with the Old Testament, forms our Bible.

Q. What is the meaning of Testament?

A. As used in the Scriptures, it means a covenant or agreement between God and man, and it was given to the Old and New Scriptures, because they contain accounts of such covenants or agreements. Gal. iv. 24.

Q. What other name is sometimes given to these Testaments?

A. They are sometimes called the Canon, and the Canonical Books, the word *canon* meaning a measuring-reed, and having been applied by ancient scholars to what would

now be called *standard* works; works by which other works are measured.

Q. Is the New Testament one book, or a collection of books?

A. It is a collection of twenty-seven different books, — of what would be called in our day pamphlets, two or three of them so small as scarcely to fill a printed page of the common size.

Q. What are the names of the books?

A. See the New Testament for an answer.

Q. Do the names of the books always indicate the names of their authors?

A. They do not. Sometimes they indicate the subject of the composition, or, if it be a letter or *epistle*, the person or persons to whom it is addressed. For example, *The Acts of the Apostles*, the Epistle to the *Romans*, the Epistle to *Philemon*.

Q. How many different classes of books are contained in the New Testament, and what are they?

A. There are four different classes: Biographical, Historical, Epistolary, and Prophetic.

Q. How many are there of the biographical books?

A. There are four, anciently called *Memoirs*,

but known now as *Gospels*, or *good tidings*.

Q. Who were the writers of them?

A. St. Matthew, St. Mark, St. Luke, and St. John.

Q. What is a general description of their contents?

A. They give us four accounts, in many respects distinct, of the earthly life of Jesus of Nazareth in Galilee, the Founder of the Christian religion, and Son of God.

Q. How many historical books are there in the New Testament?

A. Properly speaking, only one, the book of the Acts of the Apostles, written by St. Luke, and containing an account of the first preaching of Christianity by the Apostles, i. e. those who were *sent* by the Saviour.

Q. How many epistolary compositions?

A. There are twenty-one, by different authors; viz. thirteen by St. Paul, two by St. Peter, three by St. John, one by St. James, and one by St. Jude, besides the Epistle to the Hebrews, which some assign to St. Paul, whilst others ascribe it to Apollos or some other of the earliest believers.

Q. How many prophetical books are there?

A. One, commonly believed to be the work of St. John, the beloved disciple, and called the Book of Revelation.

Q. Can we place any reliance upon the titles and superscriptions which we find printed along with the various books of the New Testament?

A. We cannot. In old manuscripts the same book has various titles. The justness of their application is a matter to be investigated.

Q. Do the books of the New Testament stand in the order of their composition or publication?

A. They do not. They were arranged in their present order partly from a regard to other considerations, some of which we may still understand.

LESSON II.

INTRODUCTORY QUESTIONS.

II.

Q. What are some of the considerations which have led to the present arrangement of the New Testament?

A. (1.) Of the Gospels, that by St. John may have been placed last on account of the date of its composition, whilst the book of Acts followed the Gospels, as being occupied with events subsequent to the earthly work of the Saviour.

(2.) For the same reason, the Epistles, as a whole, would fill up a second part, and the order of the Epistles seems to have been decided by a regard to the relative importance of the cities or communities addressed.

Q. What are the oldest books of the New Testament?

A. The Epistles of St. Paul to the Thessalonians.

Q. Without aiming at minute accuracy, give a list of the books of the New Testament, in the order of their composition.

A. First, the Epistles just named, then the two Epistles to the Corinthians, then Galatians, Romans, St. Luke, Ephesians, Colossians, Philemon, Acts, Philippians, 1 Timothy, Epistle to Titus, St. Matthew, St. Mark, Epistles of St. Peter, 2 Timothy, St. James and St. Jude, Hebrews, Revelation, and the Gospel and Epistles of St. John.

Q. Is there any reason for valuing one por-

tion of the New Testament more than another portion?

A. There is, inasmuch as two of the Gospels were composed by original Apostles, hearers of the Saviour and eyewitnesses of his miracles, whilst two of them were composed by companions and friends of the Apostles.

Q. Are we assured of all the books alike, that they are what they are popularly supposed to be?

A. We are not. Whilst in the earliest ages by far the larger part of the books contained in our Canon received the sanction of all as genuine, there were a few that were not so received, and for this reason were called "*the spoken against*," as the others were called "*the universally allowed.*"

Q. Do these contested books constitute a very important, or in any sense essential, part of the New Testament, so that the doubt concerning them presses heavily upon the whole collection?

A. They do not. There is no fundamental point in Christianity, according to the judgment of any denomination of Christians, which cannot be sustained, if at all, without any appeal to these contested portions.

Q. What effect should this acknowledged uncertainty have upon our general estimate of the Canon?

A. It ought to confirm rather than weaken our confidence, because it shows that the opinion which has been handed down in the Church was not a mere blind prejudice, but the result of careful investigation, guided by facts, rather than by a preconceived idea that every writing laying claim to inspiration must be inspired.

Q. Are we still at liberty to inquire into the formation of the Canon?

A. We are; and we have the materials for such an investigation in the history of the times following the coming of Jesus. It should be remembered, however, that the early fathers undoubtedly had materials which are no longer within our reach.

Q. Are the books which were called by the early Christians "*the universally allowed*" still universally received?

A. They are by the great mass of Christian students, by men of profound learning, who have examined the subject at large with candor and patience.

Q. Does the study of the evidence for the

Bible demand advantages natural or acquired which are likely to be confined to professional scholars?

A. It does not. The careful reading of a very few books will put one in possession of the facts and of the main arguments.

Q. When did the Fathers of the Church begin to collect the writings which now compose the New Testament?

A. About the middle of the second century.

Q. What portion was first collected?

A. The Epistles, and the collection was called "The Apostle."

Q. What came next in order?

A. The four Gospels, under the name of "The Gospel," or "Evangelic Instrument."

Q. How soon did the Canon exist in its complete state?

A. Towards the middle of the third century. Origen was familiar with it, and he belongs to the former half of this century. The inquiry, however, into its claims was still prosecuted.

Q. Were there any books written which have not been preserved?

A. Allusions are made to such, 1 Cor. v. 9; Col. iv. 16.

Q. Have any rejected accounts come down to us?

A. We have some accounts of the childhood of Jesus, which were never received by the Church.

Q. Is a well-considered opinion concerning the historical evidence for the New Testament the final and conclusive reliance of the Christian?

A. It is not. It is rather an excellent and most adequate preparation for that faithful employment of the Gospel, in the discipline of the mind and heart, which will give us what is called in the Scriptures themselves the "testimony of the Spirit" to the truth of our faith.

LESSON III.

THE GOSPELS.

I.

Q. What is the meaning of the word *Gospel*, and to what books of the New Testament is this name applied?

A. It means *good tidings*, and it is applied

to four distinct accounts of our Saviour's life.

Q. What name is given to the writers of these *Memoirs*, as they were anciently called.

A. They are known as the Evangelists, or the Holy Evangelists.

Q. Are the words Evangelist and Apostle synonymous?

A. They are not. The Apostles were those who were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word, and companions of Jesus, though St. Paul, as directly commissioned by the Saviour to preach the Gospel, is also reckoned an Apostle.

Q. Were all the Evangelists Apostles?

A. Two of them were, viz. St. Matthew and St. John; and two of them, St. Mark and St. Luke, were not.

Q. Did Jesus promise any peculiar gift to the Apostles, which would make a record by them specially valuable?

A. He promised that the Spirit of Truth should bring to their remembrance whatsoever things he had said to them.

Q. What advantages had St. Mark for gaining a knowledge of the Saviour's teachings and works?

A. He was the companion of the Apostle Peter.

Q. What account does Luke give us of his own opportunities in this respect?

A. Luke i. 1–4.

Q. What may be said generally of the evidence for the Gospels?

A. That it is sufficient for any, save those who regard the matters therein recorded as intrinsically incredible.

Q. What is meant by the *genuineness* of a book?

A. We mean that it was written by the person whose name it bears.

Q. What do we mean by the *authenticity* of a book?

A. We mean the truthfulness of its narration.

Q. If the Gospels are genuine, does it follow that they are authentic?

A. If we consider the position, character, and opportunities of the persons whose names they bear, such an inference is almost unavoidable.

Q. How do we ascertain the genuineness of the four Gospels?

A. By an appeal to history, to recorded facts,

and the convictions of ancient men who had ample means for judging.

Q. What does authentic history say concerning the Gospels?

A. (1.) They were received in Christian antiquity by those whose opportunities for gaining correct information upon the subject were entirely adequate.

(2.) The Fathers assigned to them a sacred character, and treated them as the Jews treated their sacred books.

(3.) They did so, not hastily or unadvisedly, but after due examination, as appears from the fact that they rejected as spurious and unreliable certain pretended sacred writings, and, when there was any cause even for a doubt, were careful to make it known.

Q. What is the earliest testimony in point?

A. That of Clement of Rome, and that of Polycarp.

Q. By what appellation are these men known?

A. They are styled Apostolical Fathers.

Q. Are there any besides Clement and Polycarp who are known by the same title?

A. There are; but, as doubt has been thrown upon the genuineness of their writings, mention is made only of these two.

Q. When did Clement of Rome live?

A. In the last half of the first hundred years from the birth of Jesus Christ.

Q. When did Polycarp live?

A. In the first half of the second hundred years.

Q. What do we find in their writings which bears upon the matter before us.

A. We find passages which, if they are quoted from any book, must be quotations from the Gospels.

Q. But what uncertainty must there always be as to their being quotations at all?

A. These Fathers might have gathered their narratives from the lips of the Apostles themselves, and this is especially true of Polycarp, who was a disciple of St. John.

Q. To what, then, does their testimony specially relate?

A. It goes to show that the accounts in our Gospels are reliable, but it does not prove that the Fathers had our Gospels in hand.

Q. Who is the next witness?

A. Justin Martyr, a native of Sichem in Samaria.

Q. In what writing do we find his testimony?

A. In a defence of Christianity presented to

the Roman Emperor, Antoninus Pius, he refers to memoirs written by Apostles and their companions, — a very exact description of our Gospels.

Q. Does he mention the names of the authors?

A. He does not; for this would hardly have enlightened the Emperor, as the names would not have signified any thing to him; but he does quote from all four Gospels, not indeed with verbal exactness, because his purpose did not require that he should regard the precise form of expression. We know, moreover, that such was not his habit of quotation.

Q. What does he say about the estimation in which the Gospels were held?

A. He says that they were read in the Christian assemblies just as the Hebrew Scriptures were read in the Jewish synagogues, i. e. that they were regarded as sacred.

LESSON IV.

THE GOSPELS.

II.

Q. What precise period does the testimony of Justin cover?

A. He was born before the close of the first century, and converted to Christianity about a hundred years after the crucifixion of the Saviour, so that what he says may be applied to the first half of the second century.

Q. What do we know concerning the diffusion of Christianity by this time?

A. In many places, persons of all ages, of every rank, and of both sexes, had embraced the doctrine, so that in some quarters the temples of the ancient faith were almost deserted, and the priests loud in their complaints.

Q. Name the next witness.

A. We pass from Justin Martyr, in the Holy Land, to Irenæus, Bishop of Lyons, in France, then called Gallia.

Q. When was this Church Father born?

A. Early in the second century, and he was a disciple of Polycarp, who, again, was a disciple of St. John.

Q. What is his testimony?

A. (1.) "We have not received the knowledge of the way of our salvation by any others than those by whom the Gospel has been brought to us; which Gospel they first preached, and afterwards, by the will of God, committed to writing."

(2.) "Matthew, amongst the Jews, wrote a Gospel in their own language; whilst Peter and Paul were preaching the Gospel at Rome, Mark delivered to us in writing the things that had been preached by Peter; and Luke, the companion of Paul, put down in a book the things that had been preached by him."

(3.) "Afterwards John, the disciple of the Lord, who also leaned upon his breast, — he also published a Gospel whilst he dwelt at Ephesus in Asia."

Q. Who is the next witness?

A. Passing over into Carthage, in Africa, we find Tertullian, who lived from the year of our Lord 150 to a very advanced age.

Q. What does he affirm?

A. He says that the Gospels were received by the Christians of his day as the works of the persons to whom they are now ascribed, and

that the unbroken tradition of the Church has assigned to them this character. He quotes from every chapter of St. Matthew, St. Luke, and St. John.

Q. Who is the next witness?

A. Clement of Alexandria, in Egypt, who quotes from the Gospels just as any one would quote them in our day. He lived in the latter part of the second century.

Q. Who is the next witness?

A. In the first half of the third century we find Origen, of the same city, the most learned man of Christian antiquity, and so voluminous a commentator that the Gospels of St. Matthew, St. Luke, and St. John, were they lost, might be restored from his writings.

Q. What is the substance of his testimony?

A. He says that the Gospels were received without dispute by all the churches of God under heaven.

Q. Might this catalogue of witnesses be extended?

A. It might be continued indefinitely, but the earliest testimony is given, as being the most important.

Q. Were the early Christians in any condition to form a conspiracy for deceiving the

world upon this subject, or for compelling a formal agreement as to this matter?

A. They were not. They were scattered, and still struggling against opposition, and watched by their adversaries.

Q. When was the earliest of the general Christian assemblies convened?

A. As late as the first part of the fourth century, and we can hardly speak of any concerted action previous to this.

Q. Is there any testimony of the opponents of Christianity which is deserving of notice?

A. It is worth considering, that the heathen writers who attack Christianity seem to have derived their knowledge of it from our Gospels, and never raise any question as to the genuineness of these productions.

Q. Is there any testimony of those, who, though they claimed to be Christians, were not in favor with the majority of the Church?

A. There is the testimony of the sects called heretical, who accepted the Gospels, and attempted to establish their peculiar opinions by an appeal to them.

Q. How does it appear that the Gospels have

not been greatly altered since they were first written?

A. (1.) The early Christians were mostly Jews, and they held it sacrilege to alter a sacred book.

(2.) If liberty had been taken with these books, the manuscripts which have come down to us would have shown it, by their great variations one from another.

Q. To what extent is it probable that copies of the Gospel had been multiplied by the end of the second century.

A. A very careful calculation gives us about sixty thousand copies as the probable number.

LESSON V.

THE GOSPELS.

III.

Q. Do the Gospels, in their narrative, go over exactly the same ground?

A. They do not. The Gospel of St. John seems to be a kind of supplement to the other three, and aims especially to give the discourses of our Lord to his disciples towards the close of his ministry.

Q. Which of the Gospels seem to stand to each other in close relation?

A. The Gospels of St. Matthew, St. Mark, and St. Luke.

Q. Upon comparing these Gospels each with the other, what two opposite classes of facts strike our attention?

A. We notice that there are differences and correspondences.

Q. Are the differences of a very serious character?

A. They are such as are very likely to arise when different persons, of equal honesty, relate what they have seen and heard.

Q. Do they constitute discrepancies which would suffice to discredit witnesses in a court of justice?

A. They do not; but competent persons have affirmed, that they serve rather to increase confidence, inasmuch as they set aside any charge of collusion, or combined attempt to deceive.

Q. What further evidence of honesty is supplied by these discrepancies?

A. They show that the Fathers were guided by the facts in accepting the Gospels as genuine, because, had they been parties to any

forgery or deception, they would have avoided these difficulties beforehand.

Q. In what do the correspondences between the Gospels consist?

A. Not only in narrations of the same events, but in the structure of sentences and the choice of words.

Q. In what cases do we find the greatest correspondence as to language?

A. When the writer is detailing the words of Jesus, which would naturally be the same, or nearly the same, in all the narratives.

Q. Are the correspondences of a kind to indicate that one Evangelist copied from another?

A. They are not; for whilst they agree in many passages, sometimes exactly, for a line or more, they also vary each from the other, as no copyist would vary from his copy without some good reason, and in these cases we can hardly suppose any such.

Q. Why must we doubt whether the first three Evangelists were acquainted with, or followed, each other's works?

A. (1.) It is hardly to be imagined that St. Matthew, one of the twelve, and a constant companion of the Saviour, should have

copied from St. Mark or St. Luke, neither of whom belonged to this class.

(2.) If either St. Mark or St. Luke had known of the existence of St. Matthew's Gospel, they would, without doubt, have followed it more closely than they have done.

(3.) St. Mark, certainly, would hardly have written at all, had he known that St. Luke's Gospel or St. Matthew's Gospel had been written.

Q. What objections are there to the supposition of an original Gospel, from which all copied?

A. It is incredible that a document so valuable as this should have been lost, and later productions only preserved; at all events, that we should have heard nothing of such a document.

Q. What account of the matter is then, on the whole, most reasonable?

A. It is altogether likely that the great features of the Gospel narrative were early moulded into a fixed form by the constant repetitions of the Evangelists, and that the narrators, having been accustomed to this fixed way of detailing the Gospel story, adhered to it when they became writers.

Q. What other fact may throw some light upon this subject?

A. It is as good as certain that the Gospel of St. Matthew was originally written in Hebrew, and subsequently translated into Greek. Now the translator may have availed himself of the language of St. Mark and St. Luke, when they are relating the same incidents or detailing the same discourses. By the time of making the translation, the language of Christianity would have become still more fixed.

Q. What circumstance adds probability to this explanation?

A. The fact that between St. Matthew and St. Mark there is more correspondence than between St. Matthew and St. Luke, and scarcely ever any but an accidental correspondence between St. Matthew and St. Luke, except where the subject-matter is not found in St. Mark, showing, it would seem, that the translator used St. Mark freely because it best answered his purpose.

Q. Is it possible to determine from the Gospels with certainty the precise duration of our Saviour's ministry?

A. It is not. From the Gospel statements it

has been variously set down as including from two to five Passovers.

Q. Does any one of the Evangelists aim to state the events of the Saviour's ministry in strict chronological order?

A. We do not find this to have been the case.

LESSON VI.

I.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. MATTHEW.

Q. Who was St. Matthew?

A. He was a tax-gatherer, or publican, whose name, before he became a convert to Christianity, was Levi.

Q. What does the name Matthew signify?

A. God's gift.

Q. At what time and in what language was his Gospel written?

A. Probably about A. D. 65, and probably in the language which was then spoken in Judea, — the Syro-Chaldee.

Q. What other language was in common use in Jerusalem in the days of the Apostles?

A. The Greek; for we find that St. Paul, in

addressing the crowd when he had been violently seized, would have been understood in either tongue.

Q. Do we know any thing certain respecting this Apostle and Evangelist beyond what is derived from Scripture?

A. There are Church traditions concerning him, but they rest upon no very firm basis.

Q. What countries are mentioned in these traditions as the scenes of his Apostolic labors?

A. Macedonia, Ethiopia, Persia, Arabia, and others.

Q. What is the tradition concerning his death?

A. That he was either burned or beheaded in Ethiopia.

Q. For what class of Christians was St. Matthew's Gospel specially designed?

A. For Hebrew Christians; as appears, first, from the fact that Hebrew customs are not explained; and secondly, from the fact that the Old Testament is very largely quoted.

Q. Into how many parts has the Gospel according to St. Matthew been divided?

A. Into five parts, viz.: — 1. The birth and infancy of Jesus; 2. The preparation for

his mission; 3. The ministry of the Saviour, embracing full reports of discourses; 4. The sufferings of Christ; and 5. The Resurrection and the events which followed it.

Q. Can St. Matthew's account be regarded as that of an eyewitness and listener during the whole of the period covered by his Gospel?

A. We cannot with entire confidence set up this claim for any portion of the period preceding his call to be an Apostle, though he may have been with the multitude about the Baptist during the preparatory scenes described in the second part of his Gospel.

II.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. MARK.

Q. Who was St. Mark?

A. St. Mark, called also John Mark, was the son of Mary, at whose house the early Christians were accustomed to assemble.

Q. Where amongst other places in Scripture is he mentioned?

A. Acts xii. 12, 25.

Q. How was he related to Barnabas?

A. Col. iv. 10.

Q. Is it probable that he was with the Saviour at all during his ministry?

A. He may have been the young man referred to in Mark xiv. 51, as he alone mentions the incident.

Q. Where do we find him referred to by St. Paul, and where was the Apostle at the time?

A. Col. iv. 10, 11.

Q. What mention does St. Peter make of him?

A. 1 Peter v. 13.

Q. Where do we again find mention made of him?

A. 2 Tim. iv. 11.

Q. What says ecclesiastical tradition concerning him?

A. That he went to Egypt, founded the church in Alexandria, and there died a martyr.

Q. When, and in what language, was the Gospel according to St. Mark written?

A. Probably not far from the date of St. Matthew's composition, and in Greek.

Q. For what class of believers was the Gospel according to St. Mark written?

A. For heathen converts.

Q. How is this result reached?

A. (1.) There is a tradition that St. Mark wrote his Gospel in Rome, for the Roman church.

(2.) He omits much that would be specially interesting to Jewish readers.

(3.) He explains the widow's two mites as a farthing, a *quadrans*, a Roman coin.

Q. What says Church History concerning the origin of the Gospel?

A. That it was the account given to St. Mark by St. Peter, who is specially brought to our notice in the Gospel.

Q. Specify some of the distinctive features of the narrative by St. Mark.

A. It is very brief, and may have been the substance of the oral addresses which St. Peter was in the habit of making. It contains very little which is not found in the other Gospels. The style indicates little intellectual culture, and it is remarkable that one expression, "*straightway*," is repeated forty times.

LESSON VII.

I.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. LUKE.

Q. Who was Luke?

A. Col. iv. 14.

Q. Was he Jewish or Gentile?

A. We gather, from the classification given at the close of the Epistle to the Colossians, that he was a Gentile, and, from his phraseology in the opening verses of his Gospel, that he had resided long in Judea, — perhaps a proselyte of the gate, as converts to Judaism were called.

Q. Of what Apostle was he the companion during missionary tours and in prison?

A. Of St. Paul, as we learn from the book of Acts and from St. Paul's Epistles.

Q. When was this Gospel written?

A. As the book of Acts, by the same author, was written later, and closes with the year 60, it must have been written before that time.

Q. Into how many parts is the book divided?

A. Into five parts, viz.: — 1. The birth of John the Baptist and of the Saviour; 2. The

public ministry of Jesus; 3. A series of parables; 4. Events immediately preceding the Saviour's death; 5. The crucifixion, resurrection, &c.

Q. What general observations are to be made respecting St. Luke's Gospel?

A. It is very full and rich in details, and contains many beautiful parables; it was probably brought together with the assistance of St. Paul, and is distinguished by a style more elegant than that of the other Evangelists. Probably Theophilus, for whom it was composed, was a Roman; certainly he was not a Jew.

II.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. JOHN.

Q. Who was St. John, the author of this Gospel?

A. He was the son of Zebedee and Salome, and originally a disciple of John the Baptist.

Q. By what special description is he distinguished from the rest of the disciples?

A. He is called "the disciple whom Jesus loved." John xiii. 23.

Q. Did he enjoy the confidence of Jesus beyond the rest?

A. He is classed with Peter and James as admitted to a more intimate relation with Jesus. Luke viii. 51; Matt. xvii. 1; xxvi. 37.

Q. St John is commonly and justly known as especially sincere and earnest in preaching the Gospel of divine love and of humanity; are there passages in the New Testament which show that this tendency of his soul was the fruit of Christian culture?

A. Mark x. 35; Luke ix. 49, 54.

Q. Where did St. John labor?

A. For a considerable time in Jerusalem, and afterwards in Ephesus, where he died a natural death, having lived to a great age, i. e. into the second century.

Q. When and where was this Gospel written?

A. In all probability quite late in the first century, and in some region of Asia Minor, according to the general belief in Ephesus.

Q. Did St. John design to give us a complete Gospel?

A. Apparently he intended to write a supplement to what was already generally known of Christ, and to give that impression which he had made upon his own soul.

Q. In what is this Gospel peculiarly rich?

A. In those discourses of the Lord which bring into clear light his unexampled and mysterious relation to his Heavenly Father.

Q. But does St. John confine himself to reporting discourses?

A. He does not. He has given us the only account that we have of the raising of Lazarus, and a most minute, circumstantial narrative of the cure of a blind man, with the investigation into the miracle set on foot by the leading men.

Q. Where do we find the Saviour during the greater part of the period which the narrative of St. John covers?

A. We find him in Jerusalem, offering his Gospel to the Jews or instructing his disciples.

Q. For whom does his Gospel seem to have been written?

A. Rather for Gentile than for Jewish readers, and perhaps greatly for those who were addicted to philosophical speculation, and likely either to pervert or to despise the new faith.

Q. Is there any reason for concluding that St. John may have enjoyed good opportunities for culture?

A. His circumstances seem to have been easy, and his position not obscure. His father, Zebedee, had hired servants to aid him in the pursuit of his calling, and it appears that he was known to the high-priest.

Q. With what special charge was John favored by the Saviour?

A. He was intrusted with the care of Mary, his mother, and the faithful disciple took her to his own home.

Q. What great proof did John give of his fidelity?

A. He followed the Saviour to his trial, and was present at his crucifixion.

III.

THE BOOK OF THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES.

Q. What supplement to the Gospel according to St. Luke have we by the same author?

A. The book of the Acts of the Apostles. Acts i. 1.

Q. To what subject is this book devoted?

A. It is devoted to an account of the earliest preaching of the Gospel; first by Peter, as the most prominent of the Apostles, and then by St. Paul, bringing the record down

from the ascension of Jesus to the first imprisonment of Paul in Rome, — a period of about thirty years.

Q. Is there any doubt as to the authorship of the book of Acts?

A. There is none. It refers expressly to the Gospel of St. Luke, as preliminary. Moreover, it is in great part the story of St. Paul, as might have been looked for from his chosen companion, whilst it teaches Pauline doctrine, and accords in style with the Gospel.

Q. Are we to regard the book as a complete history of the Church during the earliest ages?

A. We are not. It is only a fragment, as it were a single chapter, and withal it ends abruptly. Completeness was plainly not the design, for there are many things passed over which St. Luke, with his excellent opportunities, must have known.

Q. What very valuable evidence have we of its authenticity?

A. Incidental and manifestly uncontrived coincidences with the Epistles of St. Paul.

Q. What time can we assign for the composition of the book?

A. We may fairly suppose, that, had it not been written during the first imprisonment of St. Paul in Rome, the narrative would have been continued beyond that time.

Q. By what four symbols are the four Evangelists severally denoted by sacred artists?

A. St. Matthew by a man, St. Mark by a lion, St. Luke by an ox, St. John by an eagle.

Q. From what were these symbols derived?

A. These four forms made up the cherub, and the glory of God through Christ is sustained by the four Evangelists, as by the cherub of old.

LESSON VIII.

PAUL THE APOSTLE.

Q. What special function in the Church was assigned to the Apostle Paul?

A. He was commissioned to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles, i. e. the nations, the people not Jews.

Q. On what occasion is the Apostle Paul first brought to our notice in Scripture?

A. In the account of the stoning of St. Stephen,

the first martyr who gave up his life in imitation of the Master. It is found in the last part of the seventh chapter of the book of Acts.

Q. Is there any striking coincidence here?

A. It is remarkable that St. Stephen was the first to suggest that large view of the Gospel for which Paul was afterwards so earnest, and it is true, in a very literal sense, that he persecuted the faith which he afterwards preached.

Q. Who was St. Paul?

A. He was a Jew of the tribe of Benjamin, although born beyond the limits of Judea, in what was then called *Asia Minor* and is now known as Turkey in Asia. His native place, "no mean city," was Tarsus, now Tersûs.

Q. Where and by whom was St. Paul educated?

A. In Jerusalem, by Gamaliel, a doctor of the law; the same, we may suppose, who counselled the authorities to abstain from persecuting the first preachers of the Gospel?

Q. What do we know of Saul, or the *Desired*, as he was then called?

A. He was an apt scholar, and an earnest Israelite, a Pharisee, i. e. one of the straitest sect amongst the Jews; and being persuaded that the Gospel was inconsistent with Judaism, heretical, and blasphemous, he felt bound to meet it with violent opposition.

Q. On what occasion was St. Paul converted to a belief in the Gospel?

A. He had obtained from the Jewish authorities a commission to visit the synagogue at Damascus, a city beyond the immediate limits of the Holy Land, and to bring to the metropolis for trial any Christians who might be found amongst its members.

Q. What befell him on his way?

A. The Lord Jesus, in celestial glory, met him, and turned him from his purpose, with miraculous displays, which, as he himself assures us, turned the tide of his thoughts, before only hostile to the new faith, and struck the first fatal blow at his rooted prejudices.

Q. What course did he take?

A. He remained three days in blindness in Damascus, absorbed in meditations, until at the close of the third day his decision was taken, and sight came at once to his mind and body, and he arose and was baptized.

Q. What was his course?

A. He made a confession of his new faith in the synagogue, but afterwards, feeling the necessity of further meditation and study, that he might be rooted and grounded in his new belief, he betook himself to Arabia.

Q. What was his next step?

A. After three years he returned to Jerusalem, where he remained, however, only fifteen days, holding communication only with St. Peter and with St. James, who is generally regarded as a cousin of our Lord.

Q. Did he accomplish much in Jerusalem?

A. He did not. He was never specially acceptable even to Jewish Christians, though he dealt very gently with their excusable prejudices; his mission was to the Gentiles.

Q. In what direction did he go from Jerusalem?

A. To Antioch, a city of Northern Syria, and called "The Queen of the East," where the believers were first styled Christians, and whence the first missionaries of Christianity went forth into heathen lands. Of these missionaries St. Paul was the leader.

Q. Briefly, what was his course?

A. Three distinct missionary journeys under-

taken by him, besides the voyage to Rome, are included within the narrative of St. Luke in his book of Acts; and references in the later Epistles make it probable, that, after his discharge from his confinement in this city, he again entered upon his travels, which, according to Church tradition, were terminated by a second imprisonment in Rome, where he was at length beheaded, his Roman citizenship saving him from death by crucifixion.

Q. Over what countries did the journeys of the Apostle extend?

A. Over large portions of the countries now known as Turkey in Asia, Turkey in Europe, and Greece, and it was currently reported in ancient times that he also visited Spain, and, as some add, even Britain.

Q. Was he continually journeying?

A. He was not; but occasionally remained for years in some city where the large population supplied a multitude of hearers and a variety of minds. It is noticeable that Christianity found the majority of its converts in the cities of the ancient world, so that the adherents to the old faiths were called at length Pagans or Villagers.

Q. What was the ordinary method of the Apostle in presenting the Gospel?

A. He preached first to the Jews, and then, after having been rejected by them, turned to the Gentiles. He was sustained partly by the charity of the churches, but mainly by his own labors as a tent-maker, an occupation to which, although liberally educated, he had been bred, in accordance with an excellent Jewish custom, which provided for the training of the hands as well as of the mind.

Q. What interval of time is covered by the Epistles of the Apostle which supply the limits of his labors.

A. Fourteen years, during which he visited most of the places and persons that give names to his Epistles.

Q. Describe in general language the distinguishing traits of the Apostle's character?

A. (1.) An unhesitating faith in Christ, and a self-renouncing devotion to him. (2.) A love of Christian truth, as discerning as it was impassioned, resulting in a wonderful blending of new and enlarged views with charitable sentiments towards those less advanced than himself. (3.) A calm waiting for God,

manifested in a singular presence of mind. (4.) A love of truth for his brethren, as well as for himself, displayed in a thorough and most disinterested benevolence.

Q. Can the teachings of the Apostle be regarded as merely human?

A. They cannot, for it is abundantly evident that he was especially illumined to preach Christianity, though he does not claim to have been either infallible or morally perfect.

Q. What is the main source from which we derive a knowledge of his teachings?

A. They are mainly recorded in his Epistles to the churches.

LESSON IX.

THE APOSTLE PETER.

Q. What was the original name of the Apostle commonly known as St. Peter?

A. Simon, the son of Jonas, a fisherman of the Galilean Lake.

Q. Who gave him the surname of Peter, and what does it signify?

A. It was given to him by our Lord, to denote

that energy of character which fitted him to be a leader of the Apostles.

Q. Was he a man of intellectual culture?

A. There is no evidence of any thing of the kind; on the contrary, it is plain that he wrote from a religious, a spiritual, a moral, rather than an intellectual urgency. Our attention is engaged by the Apostle Peter delivering his message from Heaven, rather than by Simon, carefully trained in the Jewish schools?

Q. Had St. Peter enjoyed any opportunities of intercourse with Jesus before he was joined to the number of disciples?

A. It is quite probable that he had been much with him. We know of two, and perhaps of three interviews.

Q. Was St. Peter prominent amongst the disciples?

A. He was distinguished amongst the followers of the Saviour. We find him at the raising of the daughter of Jairus, at the transfiguration, and in Gethsemane, and he was sent with St. John to prepare for the Passover.

Q. What disgraceful act is recorded of him in the Gospels?

A. His denial of the Lord at the palace of the high-priest.

Q. Are there any extenuating and redeeming circumstances recorded in connection with this offence?

A. We find that he speedily repented, with deep grief, and that he recovered his courage and was foremost amongst the disciples. Moreover, his impetuous character brought him into moral exposures beyond the rest of the Apostles; with the exception of St. John, *they* forsook the Master in the hour of peril, whilst he remained to deny him.

Q. What truth does his course illustrate?

A. That "the righteous falleth to rise again."

Q. Do we find that he got the better of his dangerous facility?

A. This was the final result, he was "found unto praise and honor and glory" at the last; but this result was only gradually reached, for we find that St. Paul was obliged, at Antioch, to rebuke his vacillation.

Q. What was the course of St. Peter after the ascension of Jesus?

A. He took the lead of the Apostles in Jerusalem, earnestly preaching the truth wher-

ever an opportunity was afforded, and joyfully enduring imprisonment for the cause.

Q. Upon what subject was he enlightened by a special heavenly vision?

A. With reference to the admission of Gentiles into the Christian Church, and with characteristic promptness he proceeded at once to baptize Cornelius.

Q. In what other places besides Jerusalem do we find him?

A. In Samaria, in Lydda, Joppa, Cæsarea, and Antioch.

Q. Can we certainly trace him beyond Syria?

A. We cannot with entire and historically established assurance trace him anywhere, except to Babylon, from which city his First Epistle was written.

Q. What does Church tradition affirm concerning him?

A. That he was twice in Rome, and finally suffered martyrdom in that city, being crucified with his head downward.

Q. Is this tradition reliable?

A. The *first* visit rests upon no satisfactory foundation, and the story is burdened with improbable circumstances. It is quite likely that the second visit, so called, may have

been made, and that he suffered martyrdom, though, as the Church historian, Neander, observes, the story that he chose to be crucified with his head downward, in order that he might not suffer in precisely the same way with the Master whom he had denied, betrays the morbid spirit of later days, and seems inconsistent with the healthy piety of ancient times.

Q. Do we know any thing of St. Peter's domestic relations?

A. We know that he was a married man, and it is an ancient story that his wife suffered martyrdom before her husband, and was sustained by his Christian consolations.

Q. What did the Saviour mean, so far as we can judge, when he called Simon the Rock upon which he would build his Church?

A. He meant to indicate that he would be a leader amongst the Apostles, foremost to reassemble them, to direct the choice of one to fill the place of Judas, and to plead the great cause.

Q. Was the power "to bind and loose" conferred only on him?

A. It was conferred on the rest as well, and upon Peter first, because he was the first to confess that Jesus was the Christ.

Q. What lesson for the work of religious discipline do we gather from the life of St. Peter?

A. We learn that an impulsive *nature* may be educated by the Gospel into a strong and consistent Christian *character;* that the openness of mind and heart which may facilitate the approach of evil may be made use of to secure the speedier triumph of good.

Q. Have we any writings by St. Peter?

A. We have two Epistles, which will presently come under our notice.

LESSON X.

EPISTLES OF ST. PAUL.

I.

Q. From what place and at what time was the Epistle to the Romans written?

A. About A. D. 58, from the city of Corinth.

Q. Have we any exact information about the establishment of the Christian church in Rome?

A. We are obliged to depend upon inferences.

Q. Is there any reason for the opinion, that this church was founded by St. Peter?

A. On the contrary, St. Paul expressly says that he would not build on another man's foundation.

Q. In the absence of exact information with regard to this matter, what may we gather from various sources?

A. (1.) We know that there was constant communication between this capital and the rest of the Roman empire, even the more remote provinces, and we have, so far as Judea is concerned, direct reference to this fact. Acts xxviii. 21.

(2.) There were "strangers of Rome" present at the Feast of Pentecost, who listened to Peter and witnessed the miracles of that eventful season.

(3.) We find Aquila and Priscilla, who had established themselves in Corinth, but were originally of Rome, already partially instructed in Christianity, and we know that, after St. Paul had fully initiated them, they returned to Rome.

Q. Why did St. Paul write this letter to the Roman Christians?

A. Through Aquila and Priscilla his enlarged

views of the Gospel had gained currency in Rome, and having been prevented from visiting them in person, as he had "oftentimes" purposed, and knowing that they still needed instructions, he sent this letter.

Q. How does it compare in point of fulness and of systematic character with the other Epistles of St. Paul?

A. It is much more full, and composed according to a carefully elaborated plan. It contains the materials of a Christian system of theology.

Q. Is it purely doctrinal?

A. It is not; but contains very full and most admirable lessons of practical Christian morality.

Q. What, in a few words, is the great doctrine of the Epistle?

A. St. Paul teaches that we gain righteousness or salvation through "faith working by love."

Q. What is righteousness?

A. It is the condition of one who is *right* before God, i. e. an object of Divine complacency.

Q. Does it imply blamelessness?

A. It does not; but it supposes that one is in a hopeful way to be blameless.

Q. What is the "faith working by love" which the Apostle preached?

A. It is a loving confidence in Christ, in himself, in his covenant of forgiveness, and in his promise of a new and living spirit of holiness.

Q. Why are we not saved by Jewish ceremonies, or by any other ceremonies?

A. Because ceremonies do not change the evil of the heart into good.

Q. Why are we not saved by works of morality?

A. Because, if we are continually practising self-examination, dwelling upon works, and giving ourselves up to repentance and the formation of new resolves, we lose our courage and our hopefulness, we fail to gain the spirit and power of a good life, and are distressed and perplexed without bringing much to pass.

Q. What effect has the merciful offer of forgiveness through Christ?

A. It calms an undue and distrustful anxiety, an oppressive fear, whilst by filling us with trust and gratitude it enables us to do far more than we otherwise should, so that a salvation by faith becomes eminently a salvation by works.

Q. When is this doctrine grossly perverted?

A. When it is made use of to encourage indolence or selfishness, — when it rather confirms the sinner than consoles the saint.

Q. How did the Apostle employ his great doctrine for the union of Jews and Gentiles?

A. He shows that they stand equally in need of the Divine compassions through Christ.

Q. Upon what authority does the Apostle base his teachings?

A. Not only by reference to the Saviour as his sufficient authority, but by a very wise appeal to old Jewish precedent, especially to Abraham as the father of the faithful, i. e. of those filled with faith.

Q. What cheering hope does he hold out to his countrymen, notwithstanding their contempt of his teachings?

A. He encourages a belief in their restoration to the privileges of true faith.

LESSON XI.

EPISTLES OF ST. PAUL.

II.

Q. Where and when was the first Epistle to the Corinthians composed?

A. In Ephesus, A. D. 57 or 58, perhaps a little before Easter. 1 Cor. v. 8; xvi. 8.

Q. Is it really the first Epistle?

A. It is not; we find in it a reference to another earlier composition, which has been lost. 1 Cor. v. 9.

Q. Where was Corinth?

A. It was a very rich and flourishing city, the capital of Achaia, then a Roman province. It was situated on the isthmus of the same name, between the Ægean and the Ionian Seas. It was the chief intermediate station for merchants and travellers between Europe and Asia, and was widely known, not only for wealth, splendor, intellectual culture, and refinement in the arts, but also for the grossest immoralities.

Q. On what occasion did Paul first visit Corinth, and how long did he remain?

A. Acts xviii. 1, 2.

Q. To what classes of hearers did he address himself?

A. Acts xviii. 4 – 6.

Q. Did he meet with any considerable success amongst the wealthier and more cultivated classes?

A. 1 Cor. i. 26 – 28.

Q. What were the necessities of the Church that drew forth this letter from the Apostle?

A. (1.) 1 Cor. i. 12; iii. 3; xiii. 1.

(2.) v. 1, 2.

(3.) vi. 1; viii. 10, 13.

(4.) xi. 20 – 22; xiv. 26, 40.

(5.) xv. 12, 20.

Q. What great central fact of Christianity does St. Paul bear witness to, in a very striking manner, in the course of this Epistle?

A. The fact of the Saviour's resurrection.

Q. In what way does he refer to it?

A. As a matter which he has thoroughly investigated, and upon which he implicitly relies, — citing abundant testimony of persons still living, and affirming that, if Jesus did not rise, his preaching of the Gospel is vain.

Q. What chapter may be cited as a most exquisite combination of Christian truth and Christian eloquence?

A. The *thirteenth*, in which the Apostle describes charity or Christian love, exalting it even beyond faith and hope, as perfect and ever abiding.

Q. Where and when was the Second Epistle to the Corinthians composed?

A. It was written during the latter part of the year 57 or 58.

Q. What had happened to St. Paul in the interval?

A. He had been driven from Ephesus, Acts xix. 24, and had proceeded to Macedonia, whither Titus had brought him news from Corinth, 2 Cor. vii. 5, 6.

Q. What was the occasion of the letter?

A. Titus had informed him, that, although the effect of the first letter had been on the whole good, there was need of further instruction, especially with reference to certain teachers, who made too much of the Jewish religion, and were unwilling that it should be supplanted by Christianity.

Q. How had these teachers treated St. Paul?

A. They had labored to overthrow his Apostolic character and work, by assailing at

once the soundness of his views and the purity of his intentions.

Q. What, then, are the chief topics of the letter?

A. It contains most touching exhortations to a life of hopeful fidelity, in accordance with a belief in a risen Lord, a masterly defence of the Apostle's claim to be their teacher, a kind intercession in behalf of one who had been cut off from Christian communion, but had now repented, and an earnest request of their alms in behalf of the more needy churches.

Q. Did St. Paul visit Corinth again?

A. He did. Acts xx. 2.

Q. Was this a second or third visit?

A. 2 Cor. xii. 14; xiii. 1.

Q. Is it necessary to understand a third visit?

A. The words may refer to a third intention.

LESSON XII.

EPISTLES OF ST. PAUL.

III.

Q. When and where was the Epistle to the Galatians composed?

A. Either in Ephesus, or in Macedonia, or in Achaia, about A. D. 57 or 58.

Q. What was the geographical situation of Galatia?

A. It was situated nearly in the centre of Lesser Asia, and named after a colony from Gaul, which was established there 250 years before Christ.

Q. When did St. Paul visit this country?

A. Acts xvi. 6.

Q. And when again?

A. Acts xviii. 23.

Q. Did he meet with success?

A. (1). Gal. i. 2.

(2.) 1 Cor. xvi. 1.

(3.) Gal. iv. 13–15.

Q. What was the occasion of writing this Epistle?

A. The converts of Galatia were mainly from the Jewish population, and for this reason

they were more exposed to be misled by some false teachers, who opposed the liberal instructions of St. Paul, and maintained that Christians were bound to keep the Mosaic law.

Q. By what references is this view sustained?

A. Gal. i. 6; iv. 9, 10.

Q. Had these false teachers brought any personal charge against the Apostle?

A. Gal. i. 10–12.

Q. Upon what great fundamental Christian doctrine does the Apostle build in this Epistle?

A. The doctrine that confidence in Christ as a Redeemer is to take the place of ritual observances in commending us to the Divine mercy.

Q. What practical results will be realized in all those who have this Christian confidence or faith?

A. They will be partakers in a peculiar Divine gift, the gift of the Spirit.

Q. What is the conclusive evidence that this gift has been received?

A. The fact that we are in possession of its fruits.

Q. What are these fruits?
A. Gal. v. 22, 23.

Q. Where was Ephesus?
A. It was a city of Lesser Asia on the Ægean Sea.
Q. What goddess was worshipped there with peculiar honors?
A. The goddess Diana, whose temple was famed the world over.
Q. Whence are the inhabitants of this city supposed to have derived their first knowledge of Christianity?
A. From Ephesian Jews who were present in Jerusalem at the Feast of Pentecost.
Q. When did St. Paul first visit Ephesus?
A. During his second missionary tour. Acts xviii. 19–21.
Q. For what practices was Ephesus notorious at this time, and what success had St. Paul in dealing with them?
A. Acts xix. 19.
Q. How many times had the Apostle visited Ephesus before his letter was written?
A. He had been there twice, and on his way to Jerusalem had called the elders of the

Ephesian church to an interview at Miletus.

Q. From what place, and when, was the Epistle to the Ephesians written?

A. From Rome, during the first imprisonment, about A. D. 60 or 61.

Q. Have any doubts been entertained respecting the genuineness of this letter?

A. It has been questioned by some, for two reasons.

Q. What are these reasons?

A. (1.) Although St. Paul had resided three years in Ephesus, personal references are wanting, and the false teachers against whom he had a little while before warned the elders of the church are hardly referred to.

(2.) The Epistle strikingly resembles that addressed to the Colossians, and has been supposed, for this reason, to be only an imitation of it.

Q. How have these doubts been met?

A. They have been successfully set aside by the supposition that the letter was intended rather for a province than for a single church, and was addressed to Ephesus as the chief city of the province.

Q. What was the design of the letter?

A. To reconcile growing dissensions, and point out the source of a pure and elevated Christian life for all.

Q. For this end to what does the Apostle direct the thoughts of his hearers?

A. To the great Divine work of redemption or deliverance from sin and ruin through Christ; a deliverance in which all may be alike partakers, since the Church, the body of Christ, is but one.

Q. What further use does the Apostle make of his doctrine?

A. He founds upon it most practical and earnest exhortations to live in the exercise of righteousness.

LESSON XIII.

EPISTLES OF ST. PAUL.

IV.

Q. Where was Philippi?

A. It was a city of Macedonia, at the foot of Mount Hæmus.

Q. When was it visited by St. Paul?

A. During his second missionary journey.

Q. Where did he first set foot in Europe?

A. In Neapolis, whence he passed to Philippi.

Q. Is there any record of special Divine guidance?

A. Acts xvi. 9.

Q. When did the Apostle again visit this place?

A. Acts xx. 1, 6.

Q. Where do we find mention of the good deeds of the Philippians?

A. (1.) Phil. iv. 15, 16; 2 Cor. xi. 9.
(2.) Phil. ii. 25; iv. 10, 14, 18.

Q. When, and from what place, was this letter written?

A. From Rome, during the latter part of St. Paul's first imprisonment.

Q. What object does the Apostle seem to have proposed to himself in writing it?

A. He wished to inform the Philippians as to his own situation, and to warn them against teachers who sought to degrade Christianity into a Jewish sect.

Q. Do we hear again of the church in Philippi?

A. Frequent notices of these believers occur in early ecclesiastical history. Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna, addressed a letter to them,

and Tertullian has left a good report of their Christian name.

Q. Where was Colosse?

A. It was a city in the southwestern part of Phrygia, a country of Lesser Asia, and it was situated on the river Lycus.

Q. Is it at present to be traced?

A. It was destroyed by an earthquake in the reign of the Roman Emperor Nero, and rose again in a more beautiful form, but it has now entirely passed away.

Q. How did the Gospel reach the Colossians?

A. Perhaps through Phrygians who were present at the outpouring of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost; certainly at last through Epaphras, Col. i. 7.

Q. What other reference may include their case?

A. Acts xix. 8–10.

Q. To what form of religious speculation were the Phrygians specially addicted?

A. To a dreamy and imaginative philosophy, whose votaries claimed an intimate acquaintance with the world of spirits, and were much given to detailing the genealo-

gies of angels. A rigid mortification of natural appetites and passions was enjoined as the means of attaining to this supernatural wisdom.

Q. From what class had the converts, for the most part, been made?

A. Mainly from gentiles or heathen.

Q. What was the object of the letter?

A. The Apostle sought to protect the Colossians against the pretended philosophy referred to, and also to warn them against certain moral delinquencies into which, from the want of a true Christian faith, they had been betrayed.

Q. When, and from what place, was this letter written?

A. Towards the close of St. Paul's first imprisonment, in Rome.

Q. What letter which is no longer preserved is referred to in this Epistle?

A. A letter to the Laodiceans. Col. iv. 16.

Q. Where was Laodicea?

A. It was a city near Colosse.

Q. What supposition has been made about this lost Epistle?

A. It has been supposed by some that the Epistle to the Ephesians (so called) bore dif-

ferent addresses, and that it was intended for the Laodiceans amongst the rest, so that it might be spoken of as the Epistle to the Laodiceans.

LESSON XIV.

EPISTLES OF ST. PAUL.

V.

Q. Of the Epistles of St. Paul, which is the oldest?

A. The First Epistle to the Thessalonians, or the inhabitants of Thessalonica.

Q. Where was Thessalonica?

A. It was a city of Macedonia, situated on the Thermaic Gulf, once called Thermæ, a name which was afterwards changed to Thessalonica, in honor of Thessalonice, the daughter of King Philip of Macedon.

Q. When and where was this Epistle written?

A. About A. D. 52, from Corinth, during the Apostle's first residence in that city, after his departure from Athens.

Q. What Scripture references are here in point?

A. Acts xviii. 5; 1 Thess. iii. 2, 5, 6.

Q. Where do we find an account of the visit of the Apostle to Thessalonica?

A. In the seventeenth chapter of Acts.

Q. Was St. Paul's residence in this city protracted?

A. It was so short that he was filled with anxiety about the condition of his converts, and, having sent Timothy to inquire into their affairs, he based his First Epistle upon the report which he made.

Q. Of what class were the majority of St. Paul's converts in Thessalonica?

A. Acts xvii. 4.

Q. What was the condition of the church in this place when the Epistles to the Thessalonians were written?

A. It was suffering from without and from within, from persecutions of the Jews, and from errors and disorders amongst its own members.

Q. What doctrinal topic does the Apostle discuss in his First Epistle to these Christians?

A. He endeavors to teach them that those who had died already, or should die before the Saviour's coming, as well as those who should be alive at that season, would be partakers in the new life.

Q. What had they supposed about this matter?

A. They had supposed that only those who should continue in this world until the second coming would be partakers in the resurrection.

Q. What very practical view of the matter does he present and urge?

A. He reminds them, that, since the day of the Lord comes as a thief in the night, constant preparation is the only wise course.

Q. When was the Second Epistle to the Thessalonians composed?

A. It was written at about the same time with the First.

Q. What does the Apostle add with reference to the subject of the second coming, discussed in the previous letter?

A. He teaches that no *immediate* appearance can be looked for; that many things must first come to pass.

Q. Did the Apostle believe that this second coming was to take place in his lifetime?

A. Some interpreters reply in the affirmative, others in the negative.

Q. What did Jesus say of the "times and seasons"?

A. That the Father keeps them, i. e. the knowledge of them, in his own power.

Q. What practical objects did the Apostle propose in these Epistles?

A. (1.) To correct the indolence which attempted to justify itself by maintaining the speedy coming of the Lord. (2.) To warn the converts against irregularities of life, the fruits of paganism, not yet outgrown.

Q. Do we know of any good effects from these Epistles realized in those who were addressed?

A. The Apostle visited them many years afterwards, and found them abounding in faith and love.

Q. From what Scripture passages do you gather this?

A. Acts xx. 1, 2; Rom. xv. 26.

LESSON XV.

EPISTLES OF ST. PAUL.

VI.

Q. Which are the Pastoral Epistles, and why are they so called?

A. They are the letters to Timothy and to Titus, and they have received this name because they treat of the duties of the Christian pastor to his flock.

Q. What question has been raised as to these Epistles?

A. A question as to the time of their authorship?

Q. What are the difficulties in the case?

A. It is not easy, to say the least, to conceive of any time before St. Paul's first imprisonment in Rome when they could have been written, and our book of Acts closes somewhat abruptly with an account of this imprisonment, and contains no record of any subsequent events.

Q. What explanation is offered?

A. There is nothing in the book of Acts at variance with the supposition that the Apostle was finally discharged from his imprisonment and continued his missionary labors; moreover, there is a tradition current in the Church, that he was a second time imprisoned in Rome.

Q. Is this the extent of the objections to the authenticity of the Epistles?

A. Practically it is. Some over-scrupulous crit-

ics have fancied that the style of the Epistles is not that of St. Paul, but the objection is entitled to small notice.

Q. What time may be assigned, then, for the composition of the First Epistle to Timothy, and from what place may it have been sent?

A. We may say that it was composed about A. D. 65, and that it may have been sent from Macedonia.

Q. Who was Timothy?

A. He was a native of Lystra in Lycaonia, the son of a pagan father and of a Jewess.

Q. Where do we find an account of a visit of St. Paul to Lystra?

A. Acts xiv. 6–19.

Q. Where do we find the first mention of Timothy?

A. Acts xvi. 1, 2.

Q. By whom was Timothy confirmed and fully taught in the Gospel?

A. 2 Tim. ii. 2.

Q. Was Timothy ever a travelling companion of the Apostle?

A. Acts xvi. 3, 4; xvii. 1–15, &c.

Q. What charge had been confided to him by the Apostle?

A. 1 Tim. i. 3.

Q. What was the object of the Epistle?

A. To instruct Timothy with reference to his duties to the churches.

Q. What time and place may we assign for the composition of the Second Epistle to Timothy?

A. During a second imprisonment in Rome, about A. D. 67, and it was written partly that Timothy might be "strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus."

Q. To what date may we assign the Epistle to Titus?

A. It may have been written at about the same time with the first letter to Timothy.

Q. What is its purport?

A. Substantially the same as that of the Epistles to Timothy.

Q. Where do we find an account of the charge given to Titus by St. Paul?

A. Epistle to Titus i. 5.

Q. To what Greek poet is St. Paul believed to refer in the twelfth verse of the first chapter of this Epistle?

A. To Epimenides, a religious poet of Crete,

who flourished about 600 years before the Saviour's coming.

Q. Who was Philemon?

A. He was a citizen of Colosse, apparently opulent, and the owner of Onesimus, whom St. Paul had converted to a belief in Christianity.

Q. What was the purpose of the Apostle in writing to him?

A. He wished to procure a kind reception for Onesimus, who was a runaway slave, and whom St. Paul desires Philemon to receive no longer as a slave, but as a brother beloved.

Q. What is the lesson of the Epistle?

A. It shows how Christianity may infuse a higher and holier spirit into those hard and unjust relations of life which, though it designs to remove them at last, it may be compelled for a time to endure.

Q. When and from what place was this Epistle to Philemon written?

A. From Rome, during the first imprisonment.

LESSON XVI.

THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS.

Q. Is there any other Epistle written by St. Paul?

A. The Epistle to the Hebrews has been very generally attributed to him, though always with the expressed dissent of many competent judges.

Q. Does the Epistle itself claim to have come from St. Paul?

A. It does not. Unlike the other Pauline Epistles, it nowhere presents the name or the office of the Apostle, with his usual greeting; on the contrary, in the third verse of the second chapter, the writer seems to refer to himself, not as an Apostle, but simply as one of the hearers of the Apostles.

Q. What was the opinion of those who were best qualified to judge, as living nearest to the time of the composition?

A. The opinion of the Fathers is divided. The Grecian section of the Church, for the most part, accepting the Epistle as Pauline, whilst the Roman section, until the fifth century, refused to accept it as the work of the Apostle.

Q. Are there any considerations against its Pauline origin to be derived from the Epistle itself?

A. Competent judges discover very great differences between the manner and matter of this letter, and the form and substance of the Epistles which are undoubtedly from St. Paul. The style especially is more rhetorical, and there is a free employment of an allegorical interpretation of the New Testament, to which St. Paul was not addicted.

Q. What is the modern opinion with reference to the subject?

A. It is divided, as of old, and on both sides there are great names.

Q. What, then, is the least that can be said against its Pauline origin?

A. That it cannot be wise to press it, and that any doctrine which can be sustained only from this Epistle must be looked upon as of doubtful authority.

Q. If not composed by St. Paul, to whom may we attribute it?

A. It was certainly written very early and quoted very early, and in all probability was composed by a companion of the Apostles, perhaps by Apollos or Barnabas.

Q. What class of Hebrews are addressed?

A. Christian Hebrews.

Q. Do we know any thing very definite as to the time and place of composition?

A. We do not, though, as Jews are addressed, it is most likely that it was written before the destruction of Jerusalem; for this event, which would have been singularly in purpose, is not referred to, and Heb. viii. 4 seems to indicate as much. We may say, then, some time before A. D. 70.

Q. What in the main was the design of the Epistle to the Hebrews?

A. It aims to show that the Gospel is a glorious spiritual fulfilment of the old Jewish ceremonial, and that it supplants it as the flower supplants or takes the place of the bud.

Q. What singularly eloquent passage does it contain?

A. The glorious discourse upon faith in the eleventh chapter.

Q. Against what peril may the writer have intended to guard those whom he addressed?

A. Against a relapse into Judaism, which might be caused by an overweening fondness for the Jewish ceremonial.

Q. What effect might this Epistle have upon a Jewish believer?

A. It might reconcile him to the loss of a ritual manifestation of religion, and gradually prepare him for a more spiritual faith.

Q. If this work is not to be appealed to as certainly Apostolical, has it not yet a high value?

A. It is to be prized as exhibiting, in a very striking manner, an aspect of Christianity which was very important in the earliest times, and a view which it was very natural to take of the preparatory dispensation, the law that came by Moses.

LESSON XVII.

THE EPISTLE OF ST. JAMES.

Q. In what class of sacred writings was the Epistle of St. James anciently reckoned?

A. Amongst those not universally received.

Q. What seem to have been the only grounds of doubt?

A. Amongst the followers of Jesus who bore the name of James, it was impossible to

select with certainty the author of this Epistle, though it seems to have been admitted that it was composed by one of them.

Q. What three Apostles, or Apostolic men, of this name are known to us?

A. (1.) James, the brother of John, who suffered martyrdom too early to have been the author of this Epistle. Acts xii. 2.

(2.) James the Less, or the Younger, a brother, that is, according to a Jewish use of this term, a kinsman or cousin of the Lord.

(3.) James, who was really a brother, as many suppose.

Q. Which one of the last two, then, shall we choose, and why?

A. We may decide upon James the Less, because it is likely that the own brother of our Lord would have so designated himself.

Q. Do we know any thing very definite as to the time and place of composition?

A. We do not, though, as Jews are addressed, it is most likely that the Epistle was written before the destruction of Jerusalem, as this event is not referred to; i. e. before A. D. 70.

Q. Do we know any thing about James the Less?

A. Matt. x. 3; Acts i. 13.

Q. Do we know any thing about his course as an Apostle?

A. Acts xii. 17; xxi. 18; xv. 13.

Q. How do we know that there was any James besides the brother of John and James the Less?

A. These two were Apostles and believers from the beginning; but brothers of Jesus, and amongst them a James, are named, who did not at first believe in our Lord.

Q. What Scripture references are here in point?

A. Matt. xiii. 55; Mark vi. 3.

Q. How do we know that this brother became a believer?

A. Acts i. 14.

Q. What is the main design of the Epistle?

A. It aims to protect believers against a misunderstanding of St. Paul's doctrine of salvation by faith.

Q. How might this doctrine be misunderstood or perverted?

A. It would be misunderstood, were the Apostle to be represented as teaching that a mere assent of the mind to certain propositions addressed to it has in and of itself any saving efficacy.

Q. But does the Apostle Paul teach any thing of this sort?

A. On the contrary, he sets forth a "faith that works by love," a "believing with the heart"; — and yet a careless reader, looking only at one class of his strong expressions, might so misunderstand him.

Q. What, then, does St. James present?

A. He shows, in strict accordance with the spirit of St. Paul's teaching, that the true faith is a living principle in the soul, a vital force which always leads to works, and cannot be genuine unless it so issues. He fills out the teaching of St. Paul by presenting a side of the truth which that Apostle had not made so prominent, though he had by no means left it in the background.

Q. In what respects do the instructions of St. James in this Epistle differ from common moralizing?

A. In two very important respects: (1.) They set forth an exceeding righteousness; (2.) They recognize moral excellence as the fruit of the spirit, as peculiarly possible for Christians, and as making their faith perfect.

Q. Does St. James make any direct reference to St. Paul?

A. He does not, and yet it is a very natural supposition, that he had in mind those who misapprehended the Apostle.

Q. Is there any reason for affirming that St. James was rather a Jew than a Christian, because he so earnestly preaches morality?

A. Jesus says, "Whosoever shall break one of the least of these commandments and teach men so, he shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven"; and "Except your righteousness exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven."

Q. What great religious reformer, in modern times, opposed the acceptance of this Epistle as a part of the Canon?

A. Martin Luther speaks of it slightingly, but he seems to have been prejudiced from a mistaken idea of its relation to his favorite doctrine of justification by faith.

Q. What may we learn from this fact?

A. How much wiser is the spirit of Scripture than the individual human mind, and how unsafe it is to test its broad lessons by our intellectual peculiarities. Luther needed more than any thing else the teachings of St. James.

Q. Was the question moved and handled by St. James of merely temporary interest?

A. It agitates the Church now, as in the former days.

LESSON XVIII.

THE EPISTLES OF ST. PETER.

Q. At what time, and from what place, was the First Epistle of St. Peter written?

A. About A. D. 65, and from Babylon.

Q. It has been asserted by some, that it was written from Rome: what was the origin of this assertion?

A. It has been thought that St. Peter meant by Babylon the mystical Babylon; i. e. Rome, the persecuting city, the seat of Antichrist. But this is a mere fancy.

Q. To whom was this Epistle addressed?

A. It was a circular letter addressed to the churches of Asia Minor.

Q. What was the object?

A. Rather practical than doctrinal, though the exhortations to patience and fidelity are all predicated upon the great mediatorial work of the Lord Jesus Christ, and are character-

ized by that tenderness which we might look for from the erring and penitent Peter.

Q. It has been suggested by certain critics, that the Epistles of St. Peter are only imitations of those by St. Paul. Is there any foundation for such an opinion, — any resemblance in style that would confirm it?

A. There is a resemblance between the styles of the two Apostles, and there is also a diversity; and the resemblance is no greater than we should naturally look for in the case of two writers, both engaged upon the same great subject, and often brought into contact with each other.

Q. How was the Second Epistle of Peter regarded in the ancient Church?

A. It was reckoned amongst the disputed writings, those whose genuineness was not beyond question.

Q. Upon what did the fathers base their objection to it?

A. They objected that the style was quite unlike that of the First Epistle, and that the author distinguishes himself from the Apostles.

Q. What may be remarked generally of arguments drawn from comparisons of style?

Q. That they are likely to be very shadowy and fanciful, and have often been pushed to the most opposite conclusions.

Q. In what passage does the author distinguish himself from the Apostles?

A. In the second verse of the third chapter, which is incorrectly translated from the Greek in our common Bible. It should be "The holy prophets and the command of *our* Apostles."

Q. Is any peculiar resemblance of this composition to any other writing in the New Testament collection to be noticed?

A. The second chapter strikingly resembles the Epistle of Jude, and seems to be rather the copy than the original, if either was borrowed from the other.

Q. What must be a very significant fact against the genuineness of this Epistle?

A. The fact that it lacks the sanction of antiquity, — of those who were best fitted to decide upon its claims.

Q. On the other hand, what consideration is there which should make us very slow to pronounce an unfavorable sentence?

A. The Epistle *claims*, unlike the letter to the Hebrews, to have proceeded from the Apos-

tle to whom it stands attributed in our New Testament, and if it was not from Peter, the writer was an impostor.

Q. What view of the subject has been suggested, which does justice, in a good degree at least, to these opposite views of the matter?

A. It has been argued that the first chapter of the Epistle proceeded from Peter, whilst the remainder came from another hand; and this is, on the whole, a very satisfactory opinion.

Q. Do we know any thing about the time or the place of the composition of this Epistle?

A. Nothing whatever. The spurious portions of it could hardly have been composed earlier than the second century of the Christian era.

Q. What is the object of the letter?

A. It seeks to warn Christians against corruptions in doctrine and in practice, and especially exhorts to faith in the return of Christ to our earth.

LESSON XIX.

THE EPISTLES OF ST. JOHN AND ST. JUDE.

I.

Q. How many Epistles have we from St. John?

A. They are three in number, one of them addressed to his disciples and to his fellow-Christians generally, the other two to private persons.

Q. Have any doubts rested upon their genuineness?

A. A question has been raised respecting the genuineness of the Second and Third Epistles, but this is to be explained from the consideration, that, having been at first only in the hands of the one and the other person specially addressed, they were slow in gaining a general circulation.

Q. What very striking direct testimony have we for the First Epistle?

A. That of Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna, who was a disciple of St. John.

Q. Is there any portion of this Epistle which must be excepted from what has been said of its genuineness?

A. We must except portions of the seventh and eighth verses of the fifth chapter, viz.: "in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness in earth."

Q. Has the rejection of this passage proceeded from any doctrinal bias?

A. It has been regarded as an interpolation by the ablest scholars of all denominations, yielding, as they were compelled to do, to the strong evidence in the case.

Q. At what time, and in what place, was the First Epistle probably written?

A. Near the close of the first century, in Ephesus, the favorite residence of St. John during his last years.

Q. What are the great aims of the Epistle?

A. The Apostle seeks to protect his disciples against a proud, worldly temper, which was leading some of them to be ashamed of Jesus, and to a denial of the Gospel, on account of the humble circumstances of its author. He earnestly commends, moreover, a practical Christian righteousness, the love of God, and the love of man.

Q. Why was it necessary that the Apostle should insist upon any truth so obvious as

this, that "he who doeth righteousness is righteous"?

A. Because in the communities which might be reached by his Epistle there were teachers of a fantastic piety, that made great account of imaginations and ascetic practices, but affected to despise solid goodness. Against such the Apostle utters his warning in the affectionate spirit of his Master.

Q. What great Christian virtue is made specially prominent in this Epistle?

A. Charity, or heavenly love, displayed now in piety, or the love of God, and then in humanity, or the love of the brethren.

Q. To whom were the Second and Third Epistles of St. John addressed?

A. The First to Cyria, and the Second to Gaius, persons of whom we know nothing important. According to some interpreters, Cyria is merely the Greek word for Lady or Mistress, and must not be regarded as a proper name. This was the opinion of the authors of our common version.

Q. What was their object, and when is it most probable that they were composed?

A. Their object is simply and directly practical, and it is conjectured, with some reason,

that they were written towards the close of the Apostle's life.

II.

Q. To what class of writings does the Epistle of St. Jude belong?

A. To the class of the not universally received, "*the spoken against.*"

Q. What question has been raised about it?

A. A question between the different persons who bore the name of Judas or Jude, as to which of them was the author.

Q. What three disciples of this name have been thought of?

A. (1.) The Apostle Judas, called also Thaddeus; (2.) An own brother of Jesus; (3.) A brother of the Apostle James the Less.

Q. What objection is there to regarding the first named as the author?

A. The writer of the Epistle intimates that he himself is not an Apostle. Jude i. 1.

Q. What objection is there to supposing that the own brother of Jesus was the author?

A. The writer would have been likely to name so striking a fact.

Q. Who then remains?

A. The brother of James the Less, the kinsman of our Lord.

Q. What do we know about the place and time of composition?

A. Nothing about the place, but we may fairly conclude that the time was previous to the destruction of Jerusalem, as no mention is made of this striking event.

Q. To whom was the Epistle addressed?

A. The references to Jewish Scriptures, and even to Jewish traditions, seem to indicate that the Epistle was intended for Jewish readers.

Q. We have already called attention to the resemblance between this letter and a portion of the Second Epistle of St. Peter; why do we regard the Epistle of St. Jude as the original?

A. It is more connected in its thoughts, and better arranged.

Q. What seems to have been the purpose of the writer?

A. He seeks to exclude from the infant Church pagan errors and the vices which attended them.

LESSON XX.

THE BOOK OF REVELATION.

Q. Has St. John's authorship of the book of Revelation been much contested?

A. It seems to have been generally allowed up to the third century, but since that period the opposite view has been often and earnestly presented.

Q. What historical testimony is there in its favor?

A. Testimony of the very best description, and such as would be considered entirely adequate to settle the canonical character of any other book.

Q. Specify some of those who testify in its favor?

A. Papias, Bishop of Hierapolis in Phrygia, Justin Martyr, Melito, Bishop of Sardis, the seat of one of the churches addressed, and Irenæus, a disciple of Polycarp, who was a disciple of St. John.

Q. Who was the first to oppose its genuineness?

A. Gaius, a presbyter of Rome, who was an earnest opponent of the doctrine of a mil-

lennium, the supporters of which appealed freely to this book. He flourished in the early part of the third century.

Q. What great modern reformer refused to accept it?

A. Martin Luther.

Q. What ground has been taken, with reference to this subject, by objectors, ancient and modern?

A. They have opposed the book on the score of its contents, contending that it teaches what is unworthy of an Apostle, and what does not accord with the other teachings of St. John. They remark, besides, upon the carelessness of the style, and draw a comparison between the purity and smoothness of the Gospel according to St. John, and the ungrammatical, harsh Greek of the book of Revelation.

Q. What reply may be made to these objections?

A. (1.) That our opinion as to the greater or less reasonableness of the contents of a book must not affect our estimate of the historical evidence for or against it.

(2.) That St. John may be giving us one side or aspect of Christianity in the Revelation,

and another side in his Gospel, just as we find to be the case of the first three Gospels compared with the last, that by St. John.

(3.) That the difference may be accounted for from the fact that Revelation was written some twenty years earlier than the Gospel.

Q. What, on the whole, then, must be our conclusion with reference to the genuineness of Revelation?

A. It must be regarded as established, and yet the character of the style may give color to the supposition that the work was not completed and published, and this, again, may have furnished the ancient objectors with a plausible argument against its title to a place in the Canon.

Q. What date may be assigned for its composition?

A. It must have been written after the death of the Roman Emperor Nero, and before the destruction of Jerusalem. Rev. xi. 1; xvii. 10.

Q. Do we know in what place it was composed?

A. Probably somewhere near Patmos; perhaps in Ephesus.

Q. To what class of sacred writings is the book assigned by its contents?

A. To books of prophecy.

Q. Do the prophecies extend over a long term of years?

A. They are things which the writer said must shortly be done.

Q. Are prophetical writings to be literally interpreted, or to be regarded as written "in a figure"?

A. They are to be dealt with as figurative, and their description of outward glories is to be understood as a delineation of religious and moral victories.

Q. What directly practical and didactic portions are contained in the book of Revelation?

A. There are messages to the seven churches in Lesser Asia.

Q. What seems to have been the general design of the book?

A. To encourage Christians under persecution by a prophetic announcement of the final establishment of the Saviour's kingdom upon earth, through the downfall of pagan Rome.

Q. Has the prophecy of the writer been fulfilled?

A. Not *literally* and in all its details, yet *substantially* it was fulfilled, and is fulfilling itself in the ever-increasing prevalence and power of Christian truth in our world.

Q. Give a brief account of the contents of the book of Revelation.

A. It contains:—

(1.) The introduction, which includes an account of St. John's vision of the angel in Patmos, and the messages from the Lord to the seven churches.

(2.) A glorious manifestation of God and Christ, during which the book of Fate, sealed with seven seals, is given to the Lamb that was slain, to be opened. One by one these seals are broken, and thereupon frightful plagues visit the earth. The Christians are protected against the plagues of the seventh seal, which come to an end with the establishment of Christ's kingdom upon earth.

(3.) A vision of the persecution of Christianity by Jews and pagans, with a prediction of the triumph of the saints and the ruin of their enemies.

(4.) A vision of seven vases, out of which are poured seven plagues, closing with the establishment of Christ's kingdom.

(5.) The second coming of Christ, the casting of the Devil into a dungeon for a thousand years, the resurrection of the pious, the final struggle of evil with good, and the establishment of heaven upon earth.

(6.) The conclusion, commending the prophetic roll to the churches.

THE END.

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